



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Timucuan Ecological and
Historic Preserve

Kingsley Plantation

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Timucuan Preserve/Kingsley Plantation News Release

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Update on Structural Work at Kingsley Plantation

The historic kitchen house at Kingsley Plantation, which had been closed since February 2005 due to structural problems, reopened to the public on Saturday, August 12, 2006. During the closure, structural work on the kitchen house included raising its upper story with jacks and replacing the badly deteriorated sill beams. Once the sill beams were replaced, wood frame and tabby masonry repairs were completed. Plaster was also repaired or replaced, and the interior woodwork restored to its original wood-stained appearance.

A special ranger program will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 26, 2006 to highlight the remarkable craftsmanship now apparent in the original building materials as well as the structural preservation work completed by the skilled National Park Service preservation teams. During the program, visitors will be able to view the first floor of the kitchen house. The main house, however, remains closed for structural repairs.

"This structural work project has allowed us to discover and preserve aspects of the kitchen house's original construction as well as the subsequent historic changes made throughout the nineteenth century," says Superintendent Barbara Goodman. The kitchen house dates to ca. 1800 and had several expansions during the plantation period and after.

The Timucuan Preserve's skilled preservation team led by the park's Historic Preservation Specialist was assisted by teams of experts from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center.

The north room of the kitchen house will be open daily, beginning August 12, 2006, with exhibits about the history of Kingsley Plantation. The south room will be open for viewing during ranger programs (2:00 p.m. daily). The kitchen house structural work project was a crucial step towards the preservation of the building and preparation for new exhibits and a dramatic audio tour, scheduled to be installed in 2007. There will be periodic closures of portions of the building through 2007 to complete remaining detail work such as window treatments and painting.

Historic Kingsley Plantation is located within the Timucuan Preserve on Fort George Island near the mouth of the St. Johns River. The plantation house is the oldest standing plantation owner's house in Florida. Structural repairs to the main house began in June 2006, and it will remain closed until the work on that structure is completed.

Located off Heckscher Drive/A1A, 1/2 mile north of the St. Johns River ferry landing, Kingsley Plantation is open daily, at no charge, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 904.251.3537 or visit our website at <http://www.nps.gov/timu> on the Internet.

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